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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issue of educational budgets for Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (Canada). Colleges have supported a 35% increase in enrollment, with a 40% decrease in funding, over the last ten years, while operating costs have increased. In addition, Ontario eliminated the secondary school Ontario Academic Courses (OACs), which often kept high school students in secondary school for an extra year. The first wave of students who are exempted from the OACs are expected to graduate in 2003, the same year as the last class that is not exempted. This class (the double cohort) will create a temporary enrollment increase, which will increase the budgetary demands on Ontario's colleges. Enrollment will also rise due to increased population and participation. This paper argues that Ontario's postsecondary sector is the lowest funded in North America. Total additional employees required as a result of increased enrollment is estimated at 7,114, including faculty, administration, and staff. The colleges also aim to facilitate economic development, to improve the current 91% graduate employment rate, and to develop new programs that are responsive to local, regional, and provincial needs. The paper provides a rationale for a $65 million Innovation Fund, and a $60 million Skills Fund. (NB)

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ED 471 355

Building Ontario: Ontario Colleges' Contribution and Investment
BRIEFING NOTE

Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario

December 2001

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Building Ontario
Ontario Colleges' Contribution and Investment
BRIEFING NOTE

Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology are committed to building capacity for prospective learners, offering access to programs that address Ontario's skills shortages, and continuing to prepare a skilled workforce to keep Ontario competitive.

Colleges are currently significantly underfunded. Colleges require immediate investment to ensure that colleges can contribute to building Ontario. **This investment is essential to increase access and accommodate the double cohort, to respond to labour adjustment requirements, to improve quality and produce skilled graduates that meet the needs of the evolving workplace.**

This investment builds on the commitments of the Ontario government's May 2001 budget announcement: three-year operating funding related to growth; apprenticeship growth and equipment replacement funding and the Access to Opportunities Program. These budget announcements do not address the ongoing underfunding of the college system (see Backgrounder). Decreases to, or elimination of, any of these commitments would intensify the consequences outlined below.

Consequences if investment is not made include:

- New program development will be curtailed, reducing responsiveness to the needs of Ontario's employers.
- An increasing number of programs will be suspended/cancelled, reducing access and choices for Ontario students and employers.
- Program quality will be compromised and graduates will not have all the critical skills required, lowering productivity and shifting costs to employers.
- Enrolment will be limited in high-tech programs to curtail costs.
- Student services will be frozen/reduced, compromising student success.
- Aging equipment will not be replaced negatively impacting the skill set of graduates and their employability.

Ultimately colleges will only be able to accommodate the projected increase in enrolment and meet the needs of the province's employers for skilled workers through government investment.

To build Ontario, investment in Ontario's colleges over the next two years is required.

1. Increasing capacity and competitiveness: *The Skills Fund*

Not enough skilled workers are being produced to satisfy the demand in Ontario or Canada. Compounding the situation is the large number of baby boomers that will be retiring over the next several years. Skilled worker shortages are occurring in all career fields. With the economic downturn, businesses are reducing their workforce, releasing individuals whose skill sets do not match the skills shortage gaps.

It is essential for the government to invest in skills shortage programs and labour adjustment areas to keep Ontario competitive and prosperous. For example, without investment, access to equipment-intensive, high-cost programs such as automotive manufacturing, automotive mechanic and construction engineering technologist could be

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eliminated or reduced. Significant negative impact on key economic sectors that are already projecting a significant skills shortage could follow.

The field of business services is also projecting labour shortages in occupations that colleges prepare workers for such as, computer information technology, computer engineering technologist, business administration and marketing. Again most of these programs are higher than average cost and require up-to-date equipment for students to be job-ready to meet the needs of the employers.

Responding to long-term and urgent training requirements, such as providing diverse training solutions to meet the current demand in the security sector, is integral to the mandate of the colleges. Colleges also offer programs that prepare early school leavers and unemployed or underprepared adults to access postsecondary education, improving their ability to contribute to the economy.

With investment in the ***The Skills Fund***, strategically targeted, the colleges will be able to ensure that graduates will have the job-ready knowledge and skills that employers demand.

Investment required: $60 million

2. Increasing capacity and efficiency: *The Innovation Fund*

A strong economic future for the province rests on responsiveness to an evolving work environment, on a skilled and productive workforce and on the capacity to innovate. Innovation will drive the success of college graduates. It will provide increased access and choices to students and employers and improve student retention. Failure to innovate will render Ontario's colleges less accessible to students and less relevant to employers and the province.

Over the next three years, colleges need investment in innovation involving information technology to increase access and improve retention. The investment in innovation will:

- Increase each college's capacity to accommodate the double cohort and demographic change,
- Support e-learning by establishing e-learning centres for student access, choice and retention,
- Improve customer service and satisfaction by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of information technology systems.

This investment will stimulate the transformation of how teaching and learning is managed, organized, provided and supported, ensuring that colleges are able to meet the demands of the double cohort and need for skilled workers.

Investment required: $65 million

Investment by the government over the next two years that supports requirements will help colleges meet the demands of the double cohort and those individuals returning to postsecondary education.

A backgrounder follows with information and rationale for investment in colleges to build Ontario.

Building Ontario

Ontario Colleges' Rationale for Investment

Backgrounder

Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario
Research and Policy Office, Revised December 12, 2001

Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology have contributed to social and economic development in the province for 35 years by providing *accessible, quality career education and training* to over one million adults each year.

- Colleges have supported a **35% increase in enrolment** with a **40% decrease** in funding unit over the past 10 years while operating costs rose.
- Colleges have been **responsive** to business and industry needs for a skilled workforce across Ontario as reflected by 91% graduate placement rate.
- Colleges demonstrate **accountability** to their stakeholders through several measures including Key Performance Indicators, which validate the quality of college programs and the knowledge and skills acquired by college graduates.
- Ontario's colleges are committed to **common core goals**, which encompass access, accountability, responsiveness and quality. At the same time they are **also individually unique**, diverse in program mix and differentiated in areas of specialization in meeting local needs.

In 2001 the Ontario government announced a three-year commitment for operating funds, increased apprenticeship funding over three years, provided funding for capital equipment for apprenticeship programs and continued funding the Access to Opportunities Program. It is recognized that these commitments are significant for the government. However, the fundamental problem in the three-year funding announcement is that the per student funding allocation continues to be inadequate.

College leaders are concerned that, without appropriate increases in operating grants, colleges will not be able to accommodate the double cohort. **The college and government objectives of access, quality and accountability are no longer well served by the current funding level.**

Government, business and various organizations underscore the need for education and training to address skills training issues and ensure Ontario's competitiveness globally.

The challenges we face today are sweeping – demographic, technological and attitudinal. Our response must be equally as broad....To meet these challenges head-on, Ontario has a coordinated strategy for training that is developed in partnership with business and trainers.

Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training Colleges and Universities,
Toronto Board of Trade, September 2001

Investment in apprenticeship...is a notable area where Canada appears to underperforming, especially vis-a vis continental European nations...the centre for the Study of Living Standards cited a declining number of participants as well as certification rates in Canada over the past decade.

Both Canada's private and public sectors must boost investments in education and training, and put greater focus on older workers to remain in the workforce.

Canada's Talent Deficit, TD Economics, September 2001

...while areas like access to a first-class education and health care system continue to be important in fostering a competitive city, there is evidence they are areas of concern for the future competitiveness of the city. This is particularly worrying given the importance attributed to an educated and skilled work force.

Perception's of Toronto's Competitiveness: A Survey of Senior Executives,
The Toronto Board of Trade, September 2001

The fundamental change in the nature of work to include higher technical content underlines the need for lifelong learning and continuous training in the workplace. For Canadian industries to remain competitive, the country must continue to graduate ever-greater numbers of people from postsecondary institutions and continue to train people throughout their lives.

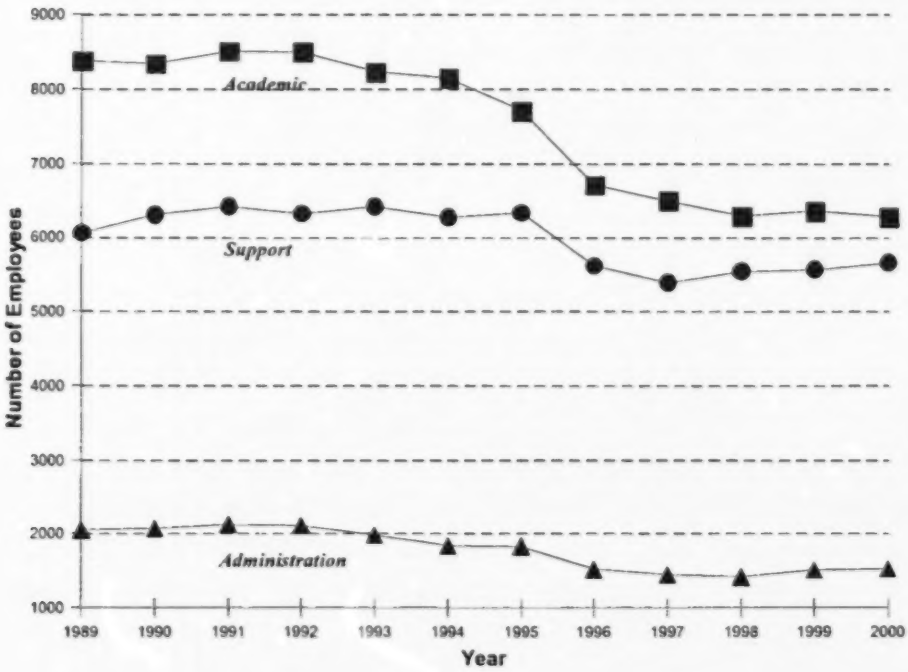
Performance and Potential 2001-2002, Conference Board of Canada, October 2001

1. What challenges are facing Ontario's ability to maintain a skilled workforce?

1.1 Capacity of postsecondary institutions and the quality of programs

- Programs are becoming increasingly sophisticated leading to increased program delivery costs. This results in program choices and quality being compromised due to insufficient funding; program cancellations; curtailment of new program development; limiting enrolment in costly programs.
- There has been a significant decrease in all staffing groups since 1995 which has had a serious impact on the ability to provide high quality programs and services to students and clients.

Figure 1: Full-time staff in Ontario Colleges 1989-2000



- The total additional staff required both to replace retiring staff and to accommodate the increase in enrolment is **predicted to be 7,114,** with distribution amongst the employee groups as follows (Figure 2). This will create challenges in the recruitment of qualified staff in a very competitive climate.

	# additional staff required to replace retiring staff	# additional staff required to accommodate increased enrolment	Total additional staff required
Support Staff	1,205	1,172	2,377
Administrative Staff	302	332	634
Faculty	2,688	1,415	4,103
Total	**4,195**	**2,919**	**7,114**

Figure 2 Total Additional Staff Required by 2006

- Replacement of old and obsolete equipment over the past several years has been deferred due to insufficient funding.
- There are insufficient learning resources for increased enrolment, for example library resources.
- Most colleges have considerable deferred maintenance costs identified. The government has identified $313 million in deferred maintenance costs to 2003.

1.2 **Retirements** in Ontario are projected to have a significant impact on the skill profile of the workforce.

- A massive number of retirements is projected due to the baby-boomer cohort.
- Canadians are retiring earlier; it is more difficult to project early retirements and at the same time the labour force growth rate is diminishing.
- In Ontario, MTCU projected retirement rates from 20-46% in 41 selected occupations by 2006. Examples of these occupations include registered nurses, management positions, tool and die makers, bookkeepers, construction millwrights, and heavy equipment operators.

1.3 **Ontario's Skills Shortages**:

Skills shortages pose a serious threat to the competitiveness of Canadian industries, and the problem is likely to get worse as changing demographics and an aging workforce place an increased strain on the supply of skilled workers.

Conference Board of Canada, the INSIDEDGE

- The government has indicated the need to double the number of apprentices over the next three years, from 11,000 to 22,000.
- Several sectors that are key to continued economic growth are predicting skills shortages in the near future. For example, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association (APMA) reports that between 1998 and 2007, more than 34,000 tradespeople will be needed with

only 20,000 available. Thirty six per cent of manufacturing companies in Ontario reported slowed growth as a result of missing technological expertise.

- An increase in unemployment does not ensure that those available for employment have the skills necessary to fill the skills gap. There is usually a significant mismatch.

Factors Impacting Canada's Talent Deficit

- The out-flow of highly-skilled workers to the U.S. is material...but at the same time, Canada benefits from an even larger in-flow of skilled workers from the rest of the world resulting in a "brain gain"
- Canada is unable to produce enough well-educated, highly-skilled workers to satisfy the rapid growth in demand
- The unemployment rate is the lowest in decades
- Looming retirement of the giant cohort of baby boomers
- Mismatch of skills related to the rapid proliferation of high technology across the country
- Rising competition globally for skilled workers

Canada's Talent Deficit, TD Economics, September 2001

2. How will investment in Ontario's colleges address these challenges?

Ontario's colleges have excelled in providing diverse applied learning opportunities preparing educated, skilled-workers for Ontario's social and economic development. Given the double cohort, the labour adjustment demands, the projected skills shortages and retirements, immediate investment in the colleges is imperative to ensure they will have the capacity to continue to build Ontario's economy.

2.1 Increasing competitiveness: *The Skills Fund*

Colleges provide programming ranging from post-graduate specialized programs, to diploma and certificate programs to various preparatory programs for high school early leavers, high school graduates and mature learners. This unique diversity of programs and learners position the colleges to effectively address the skills shortage needs of the province and provide opportunities to those individuals underprepared and/or unemployed to obtain a postsecondary education. Examples of these programs include:

- Automotive Manufacturing/Product Design
- Automotive Mechanic
- Construction Engineering Technician/Technologist
- Other engineering Technician/Technologist: Electrical/Civil/Chemical/Mechanical
- Heavy Equipment Technician and Operator
- Computer Information Technology
- Computer Engineering Technician/Technologist
- Registered Nurse
- Tourism Management
- Chef Training
- Colleges Preparatory Programs for example, Health and Technology
- Business Administration: Administration/Accounting/Management/Human Resources/Financial Services

The majority of these programs require the application of knowledge and skills utilizing state-of-the-art equipment. One large college estimates its deferred capital instructional equipment costs at over $9 million. This does not include the equipping of SuperBuild funded space.

Skills shortages exist across a wide variety of occupations which are attractive destinations for students graduating from high school (double cohort), mature learners and lifelong learners. Colleges continue to be the primary trainer of apprentices, generating 92% of the training day activity in the province.

Responding to long-term and urgent training requirements, such as providing diverse training solutions to meet the current demand in the security sector, is integral to the mandate of the colleges. For example in health, security and emergency fields colleges can provide specialized programs such as Nursing, Law and Security, Police Foundations, Emergency Response Telecommunications, Fire Protection – Emergency Services, Security and Alarm System Maintenance and Customs Administration. Additional programs can be quickly developed using the expertise of our staff and private sector partners.

With investment in the *Skills Fund* , colleges will be able to ensure that these programs will have state-of-the-art equipment and faculty and graduates will have the job-ready knowledge and skills that employers are demanding.

2.2 Increasing capacity and efficiency: *The Innovation Fund*

A strong economic future for the province rests on responsiveness to an evolving work environment, on a skilled and productive workforce and on the capacity to innovate. Innovation is the engine to the success of college graduates. It will provide students with increased access, choices and improve student retention. Failure to innovate will render Ontario's colleges less attractive to students and less relevant to employers and the province.

Colleges are increasingly and integrally involved in innovation initiatives:

- Many colleges receive funding through the federal Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Innovation Trust to conduct applied research in collaboration with their business partners.
- Colleges are involved in Ontario's centres of excellence which are considered to be key in building a competitive advantage for companies.
- A wide variety of services and collaborations are in place to support small business development and growth.
- Colleges have been at the forefront of innovative programming and partnerships to train and retrain Ontario's workforce.

Unleashing Innovation
State of the-art equipment and facilities for Ontario's colleges, universities and hospitals and research institutes are a necessary prerequisite to be a world leader in research and development.

Michael Gourley, Chair, Ontario Innovation Trust,
The Globe and Mail. October 17. 2001

Over the next two years, colleges need innovation investment critical to the future of colleges, graduates and the province. The investment in innovation involving information technology will:

- Increase each colleges' capacity to accommodate the double cohort and demographic increase,
- Support e-learning by establishing e-learning centres for student access and retention,
- Improve customer service and satisfaction by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of information technology systems.

The Innovation Fund could support the replication of best practices described *in Portals and Pathways, the Investing in Students Task Force Report* such as:

- Collège Boréal—First Year via Distance Education
- Humber College—"College of e"
- Sir Sandford Fleming College—Learning Resource Centres
- Fanshawe College—Delivering Courses through CD-ROM
- Confederation College—Alternate Delivery of Programs
- Seneca College—Learning Commons
- Ontario College Common Information Systems—common financial information systems with 12 colleges

> Innovation: Driving Growth
> *Innovation is about knowledge useful in your business through improving the way you do things. It's using knowledge to be more productive.*
> Michael Vennat, President. Business Development Bank of Canada

3. Why is investment in colleges required?

Colleges are severely underfunded. Ontario's postsecondary sector is the lowest funded in North America.

3.1 1991-2001

Since 1991 there has been a **33% increase in enrolment**: in 1991 there were 103,598 students and by 2001 there were 137,807 students.

During this period there was significant unfunded growth. Per funding unit in 1990 was $5,775. In 2001 it was $3,534, a **decrease of $2,341 or 40%**.

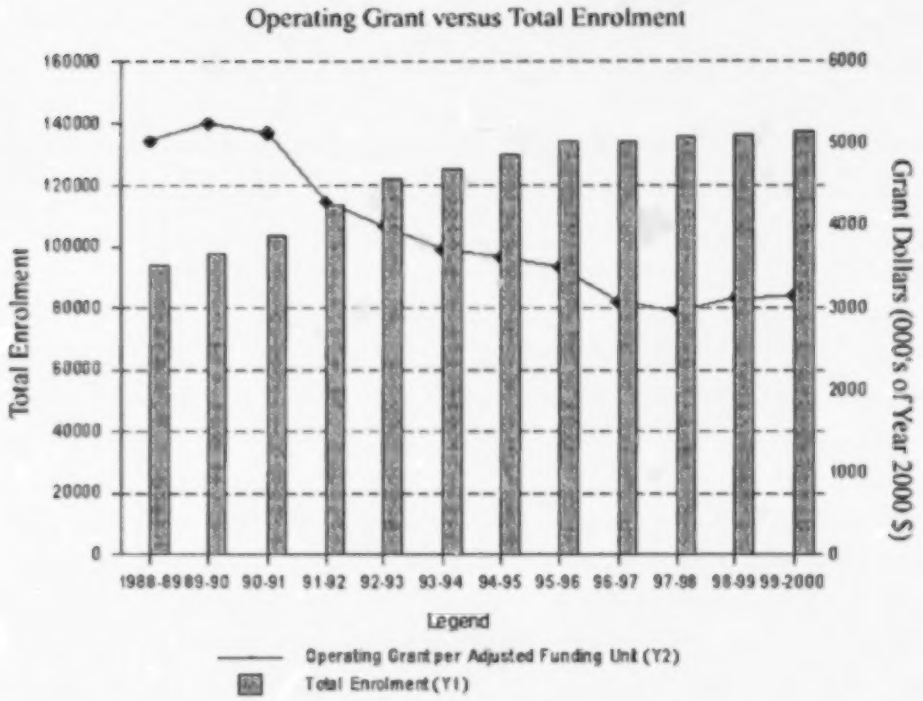
2000-2010

By 2010 there is a projected enrolment increase due to the double cohort, increased participation rates and demographic change. By 2006, the peak of the double cohort, enrolment is projected to grow by 32,000 with an additional increase of 5,000 by 2010.

3.2 General situation facing colleges:

Postsecondary enrolment and the General Purpose Operating Grant have not increased proportionately with the increase in enrolment far outstripping the funding provided Figure 3. Over the past several years, this has required colleges to implement strategies that have

compromised many operations of the college such as the library, student counseling, and equipment purchases in order to maintain quality in the classroom.



- The operating grant is not adequate. Per student funding continues to be insufficient for covering all of the costs of most programs.
- The Fall 2001 three-year forecast developed by the colleges clearly demonstrates that if colleges do not increase revenues and/or decrease expenses, 24 of the 25 colleges could be in an in-year (and accumulated deficit position as well) by 2003-04. To responsibly meet these challenges and to ensure their budgets are not in deficit, colleges will have to implement strategies that may
  - decrease access,
  - decrease program choices and quality,
  - perpetuate the use of obsolete equipment,
  - increase the cost to students in many programs,
  - compromise faculty currency, and
  - reduce student services and support.

The projections show that the revenue/expenditure situation facing colleges becomes increasingly problematic from year-to-year, with most colleges potentially reaching an in-year operating deficit position by 2003-2004 as well as an accumulated deficit.

Potential year-end system results	March 31/03	March 31/04
In year Surplus/Deficit	**(63,322)**	**(85,315)**
Reserve Balance	**(17,424)**	**(102,739)**

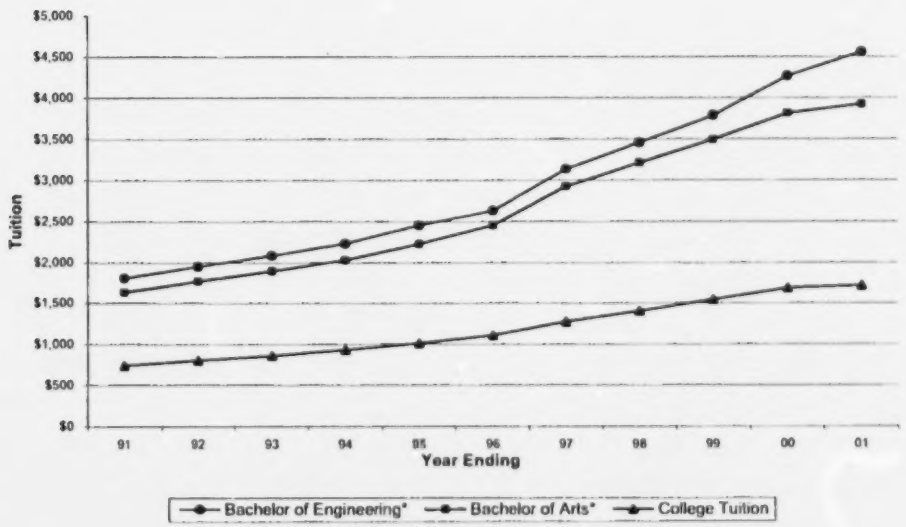
Note: These numbers are preliminary forecasts based on standard assumptions before colleges take actions to address their potential deficits.

- Equipment is becoming increasingly obsolete with colleges deferring purchase of up-to-date equipment due to insufficient funds.
- The increased sophistication of program equipment and the digitalization of previously manual operations have increased the delivery costs for the colleges.
- Appropriate classrooms, laboratories and offices are required with the supporting infrastructure to utilize technology.
- Colleges are unable to plan effectively for new programs and increased enrolment due to insufficient funds to hire new staff and purchase required equipment.
- Government's lack of recognition of increased inflation rate, the actual cost of operation, equates to hidden funding reductions. The resulting per student funding does not correspond to the increased operating costs colleges are experiencing.

3.3 Colleges are significantly underfunded compared to other publicly funded sectors and the gap continues to widen.

- Figure 4 demonstrates college and university tuition fees are both rising. University fees are rising at a greater rate, increasing the gap between the two every year.

Tuition Fees: College and Selected University BA's



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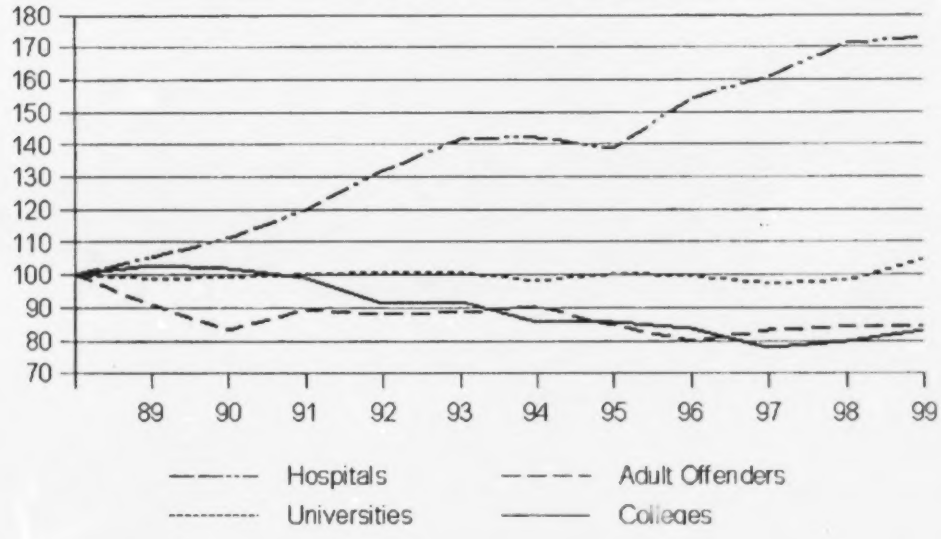
- Figure 5 shows per client funding in four publicly-funded sectors: hospitals, universities, colleges and correctional facilities and underlines the ongoing under-funding of colleges.

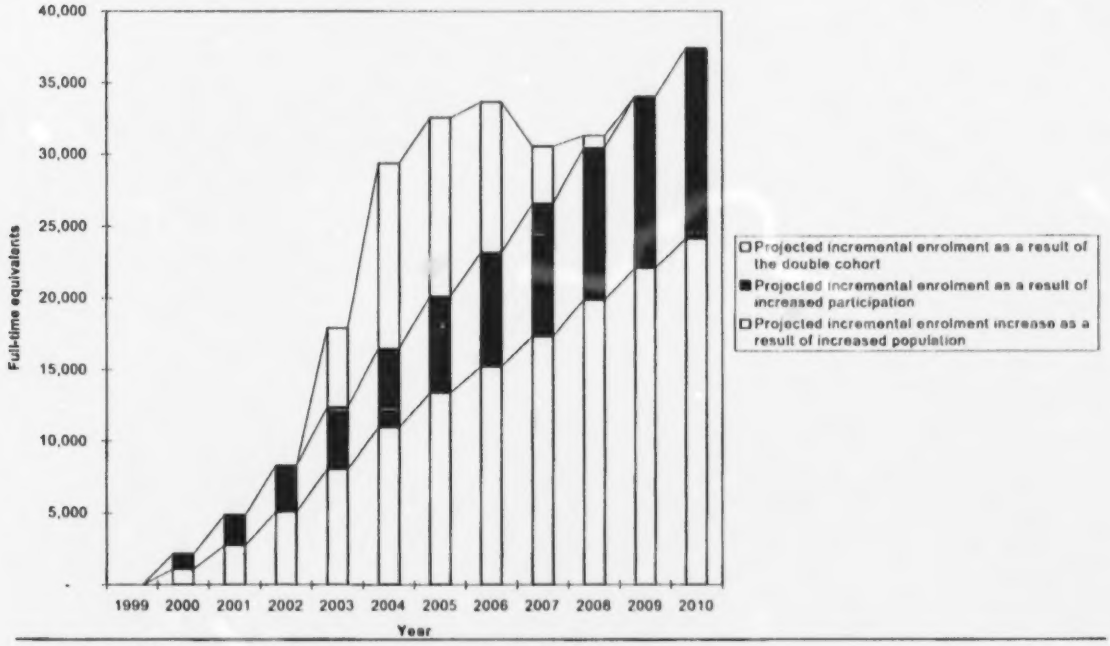
Client Funding in Four Publicly Funded Sectors



Source: Council of Universities 2000 Resource Document

3.4 Enrolment projections

- Figure 6 shows the enrolment projection increasing 32,000 by 2006 due to the double cohort, increased participation rates and demographic changes



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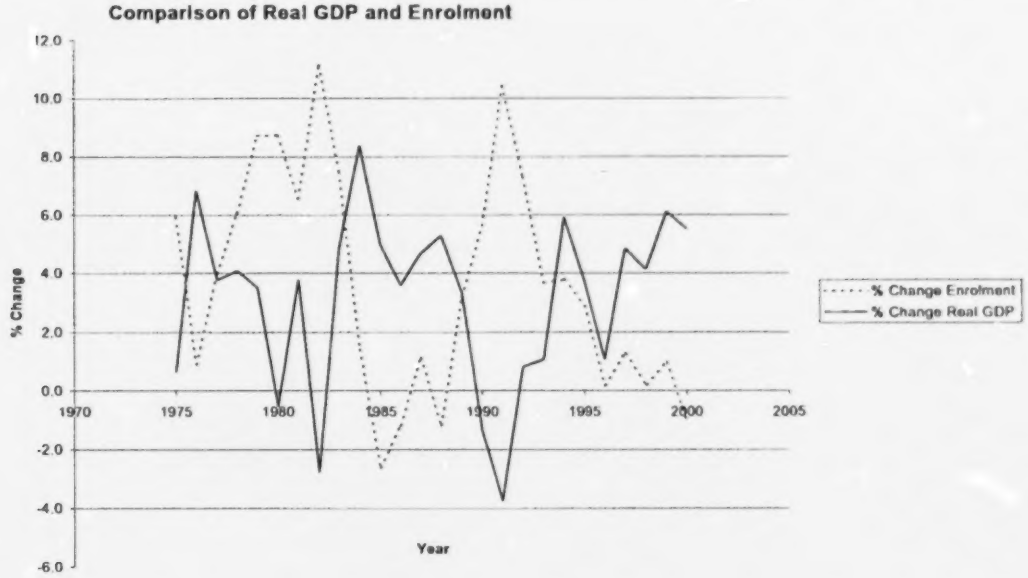
- Figure 7 demonstrates the countercyclical nature of college enrolment in relation to the economy. Enrolment increases during economic downturns. As we enter a period of recession in Ontario it becomes imperative that investment is made to accommodate not only the double cohort but also the increased demands of those returning to college .



Raising the Bar: Educational Requirements for Employment Have Changed

A very consistent warning is being sounded, and the message is clear: the workplace is increasingly skills-intensive and is demanding a higher level of education in every significant occupational category. Employment in high-skilled occupations demonstrated by far the largest growth in the 1990's and individuals without a highschool diploma suffered severe employment losses during the decade.

Moreover, a high school diploma is now a minimum requirement to work in even low-skilled occupations...Most importantly, employment success was guaranteed for those with a postsecondary diploma or university degree.

Performance and Potential 2001-2002, Conference Board of Canada, October 2001

4. What are the consequences of not investing?

- New program development will be curtailed reducing responsiveness to the needs of Ontario's employers.
- An increasing number of programs will be suspended/cancelled,reducing choices for all students.
- Program quality will be compromised and graduates will not have all the critical skills required by the workplace.
- Enrolment will be limited in costly programs to curtail costs, which will reduce graduates in high tech programs.
- Student services will be frozen/reduced compromising student success.
- Equipment will be old, not state-of-the-art, negatively impacting the skill set of graduates and thus their employability.
- Innovation will be curtailed, impacting graduates' skills and employers' potential.

- **Ultimately colleges will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in enrolment (double cohort).**

- **The needs of the province's employers for skilled workers will not be met.**

Summary

Ontario's colleges are committed to working together with the government, business and industry, for high-quality education and a competitive economy. While recognizing the commitment the government has already made for the next two years, the colleges require additional investment to maximize this commitment and the SuperBuild investment to accommodate the double cohort and meet the demands of the skills shortage areas with high quality programs.

Appendix 1
College Commitments

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology propose to increase access **for students, providing opportunities for 32,000 students by 2006 by:**

- transforming the programs available to students to suit the new economy i.e. new/revised programs will be offered each year;
- increasing the effective use of distributed learning;
- meeting SuperBuild commitments.

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology propose to provide additional skilled workers **to facilitate economic development by:**

- developing and offering programs that directly train workers in areas of skill shortages (e.g. in collaboration with business and industry, colleges will forecast areas of skill shortages and develop and offer appropriate programs);
- providing a learning environment with state-of-the–art equipment and resources;
- ensuring college staff have state-of-the–art knowledge and skills.

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology propose **to provide leadership in the public sector** by demonstrating accountability to stakeholders by:

- continuing to demonstrate excellence on provincial Key Performance Indicators and improve current rates Graduate Employment Rate (91%), Employer Satisfaction (91%) and Graduate Satisfaction (83%);
- continuing to utilize program advisory committees, comprised of 10,000 employers across the province, to ensure the relevance of college programs;
- supporting the use of the various individual institutional quality assessment activities (e.g. new program review initiatives).

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology propose to be **responsive to local, regional and provincial** needs by:

- developing new programs and initiatives to support business and industry needs;
- responding to government-led initiatives;
- providing leadership in education, training and applied research opportunities in new and emerging growth areas.

January 2001

Appendix 2

Hiring Difficulties by Occupation

Agriculture: agriculture related occupations, drivers and other transportation occupations

Primary: fishers, forestry workers, and skilled workers in other related occupations

Manufacturing: workers in manufacturing occupations; skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

Construction: workers in construction area, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled

Transportation and communication: drivers, occupations in transport trades, warehousing and materials handling

Wholesale: sales and account representatives, sales and customer service clerks, warehousing and materials handling workers

Retail: sales and customer service clerks, sales and account representatives

Finance, Insurance and Real Estate: sales and account representatives, sales and customer service clerks, clerical occupations, occupations in management area and professionals

Business services: computer specialists, occupations in management area and professionals, science graduates, engineers, sales and account representatives.

Education and Health and Social Services: occupations in medicine/health, and the management area, professionals, and clerical occupations.

Hospitality, Personal and Other Services: occupations in food serving and preparation field, sales and customer service clerks, occupations in hotel, tourism and recreation area.

Source: CFIB results of Hard Facts Survey, Oct-Nov 2000

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